

Message Text

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43

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FM AMEMBASSY BELGRADE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8937

INFO AMEMBASSY ROME IMMEDIATE

AMCONSUL TRIESTE IMMEDIATE

USMISSION NATO BRUSSELS IMMEDIATE

AMCONSUL ZAGREB UNN

CINCUSNAVEUR

CINCUSAFE REMSTEIN AB GER

UNCLAS BELGRADE 1540

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, OGEN, YO, NATO, US

SUBJECT: PRESS RELEASE ON "DARK IMAGE"

REF: STATE 064938; BELGRADE 1530

EMBASSY TODAY RELEASED FOLLOWING PRESS STATEMENT TO YUGOSLAV AND US MEDIA BASED EXACTLY ON LANGUAGE IN FIRSTREFTTEL: GIVEN APPARENT LOCAL MISUNDERSTANDING REGARDING THE MATTER, IT WOULD SEEM USEFUL TO CLARIFY THAT UNITED STATES AND ITALIAN FORCES ARE ENGAGED IN A LONG-PLANNED SMALL-SCALE NATO AMPHIBIOUS EXERCISE IN NORTHEAST ITALY IN THE VICINITY OF THE TAGLIAMENTO RIVER. THE EXERCISE, CALLED "DARK IMAGE 74" BEGAN MARCH 29 AND ENDS APRIL 5.

FOLLOWING COMPLETION OF THE EXERCISE ARE LONG-STANDING PLANS FOR SOME SIXTH FLEET UNITS TO VISIT THE PORT OF TRIESTE. THIS VISIT WILL INCLUDE SHORE LEAVE FOR THE PERSONNEL ON THE SHIPS. SIXTH FLEET SHIP VISITS, INCLUDING SHORE LEAVE IN TRIESTE AND VISITS TO YUGOSLAV PORTS, HAVE BEEN ROUTINE OVER UNCLASSIFIED

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THE PAST MANY YEARS.

EXERCISE DAR IMAGE 74, AS WELL AS THE CALL OF US UNITS IN TRIESTE, WAS SCHEDULED MANY MONTHS IN ADVANCE. SIMILAR NATO AMPHIBIOUS EXERCISES HAVE BEEN CONDUCTED IN PAST YEARS IN THIS SAME AREA. IT IS IN NO WAY CONNECTED WITH THE CURRENT ITALIAN-YUGOSLAV DISPUTE REGARDING TRIESTE.

THE UNITED STATES CONTINUES TO ADHERE TO THE POSITION WE HAVE TAKEN SINCE 1954 WHEN THE LONDON MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING REGARDING THE FREE TERRITORY OF TRIESTE WAS SIGNED BY ITALY, YUGOSLAVIA, THE UNITED KINGDOM, AND THE UNITED STATES. IN A PRESS RELEASE OF OCTOBER 5, 1954, WE SAID:

"THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT TAKES THIS OPPORTUNITY TO DECLARE IT WILL GIVE NO SUPPORT TO CLAIMS OF EITHER YUGOSLAVIA OR ITALY TO TERRITORY UNDER THE SOVEREIGNTY OR ADMINISTRATION OF THE OTHER."
TOON

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